



# 1997-98 KIRIS ASSESSMENT

## Open-Response Item Scoring Worksheet

### Grade 8—Social Studies Question 11

The **academic expectation** addressed by “Term Limits” (Question 11) is

2.15 Students can accurately describe various forms of government and analyze issues that relate to the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy.

The **core content** assessed by this item includes

- The Constitution of the United States is a flexible document and changes over time to meet the needs of its citizens.

#### Term Limits

The twenty-second amendment to the U.S. Constitution limits the president of the United States to two terms in office. In the last few years, several states have passed laws limiting the number of terms or number of years in office that political representatives (such as senators, members of Congress, state assembly representatives, mayors, or city council members) can serve. Discuss reasons for **and** against term limits for political representatives other than the president.



## SCORING GUIDE

### Grade 8 Social Studies

| Score | Description   |
|-------|---|
| 4     | Student thoroughly discusses reasons for and against term limits, with appropriate examples and details. Response shows a thorough understanding of political representation. |
| 3     | Student generally discusses reasons for and against term limits with some examples and details. Response shows a general understanding of political representation.           |
| 2     | Student gives a limited discussion for and/or against term limits. Response shows limited understanding of political representation.  |
| 1     | Student gives reasons for and/or against term limits with minimal or no discussion. Response shows little or no understanding of political representation.                    |
| 0     | Response is totally incorrect or irrelevant.  |
| Blank | No response.  |

#### Against term limits:

- Greater continuity and stability in government
- More experienced representatives
- Can retain those who serve well
- Unnecessary because bad representatives can be voted out

#### For term limits:

- Keep representatives from becoming too powerful
- Reduce chances of corruption
- Give other people a chance in office
- Bring in new ideas and opinions



# ANNOTATED STUDENT RESPONSE

## Grade 8 Social Studies

### Sample 4-Point Response of Student Work

#### Student Response

The laws passed by some states to limit the number of years a political representative can stay in office can be defended or opposed. I personally have mixed feelings on the issue.

On one hand, term limits keep one man from having power over a long period of time. I have often heard that power can damage a person's character. If one representative continues to get reelected – how do you think that will affect his ego? A big ego and power mixed together can distort anyone's vision and keep them from making the best decisions. Term limits also assure that fresh ideas will be brought into the position every few years (fresh ideas are always in demand). They also get unsung, new leaders into the picture. When voters can fall back on old, familiar faces, they may do so, and destroy opportunities for leaders who may be able to do twice as well. Limiting how many years a political representative can stay in office will help turn over new faces and ideas.

What if, by chance, the politician who's term is limited happens to be the best thing that's ever happened to that area? What if he has brought about amazingly positive changes and has ideas for more? What is the point of some law replacing him with an unexperienced leader? I believe that a good leader needs a lot of time looking at and understanding a community from the point of view of his position. That's why a term of perhaps 4 or 8 years is barely enough time for a leader to establish himself before he is replaced. Last, if a politician is on the last term he could possibly serve, don't you think he would get a little lazy? Without the need to perform at his best in hope of reelection, he or she may wonder why bother.

So, you can see that this is a very controversial issue. No simple solution can be found.

← Student thoroughly discusses several reasons for term limits. Discussion includes explanatory detail.

← Student thoroughly discusses several reasons against term limits. Discussion includes explanatory detail and the use of rhetorical questions as general examples.

Overall, student demonstrates a strong ability to analyze an issue (i.e., term limits) that relates to the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy. By thoroughly discussing reasons for and against term limits, student shows a strong understanding of political representation.



# ANNOTATED STUDENT RESPONSE

## Grade 8 Social Studies

### Sample 3-Point Response of Student Work

#### Student Response

One reason that term limits for political representatives are good is that it prevents any of them from becoming too powerful. Another reason that term limits are good is that it gives a larger number of people a chance to run for office, thus giving a larger variety of people the chance to be represented. Another reason that term limits are good is that they prevent either one of the two main political parties (Democrats or Republican) from becoming dominant in office.

One reason that term limits for political representatives are bad is that even if the the person elected to an office has been doing an exeptionaly good job, they still have to be replaced after so long in office. Also, term limits raise the probability that someone that will end up making bad decisions and causing problems will be elected to office.

← Student provides several general reasons for term limits (e.g., “it prevents any of them from becoming too powerful”), including one general example (i.e., a larger variety of people could be represented) and some detail.

← Student provides a general discussion of a reason against term limits, including an appropriate example.

← Student offers a second reason against term limits but reason is questionable.



# ANNOTATED STUDENT RESPONSE

## Grade 8 Social Studies

### Sample 2-Point Response of Student Work

#### Student Response

##### Term Limits

Reasons for and against term limits for political representatives other than the president are:

Some people like who the senator, members of congress and so on, and they like there ideals so they want the same people to be senator over and over again.

But some people don't want senators, members of congress, state assembly, representatives, mayors, or city council members to serve more than two terms because they don't want them to try to be King.

Also they want other Ideals that other people might have. Instead of the same thing.

← Student provides a limited discussion of reasons for term limits.

← Student provides a limited discussion of reasons against term limits.



# ANNOTATED STUDENT RESPONSE

## Grade 8 Social Studies

### Sample 1-Point Response of Student Work

#### Student Response

a. Some good reasons to have a term limit on a representatives term is (1) Sometimes we elect a disaster for a representative (2) They need to get some really old members out and replace them with new members since the old are in bad shape.

b. Reasons against it are (1) Some people like older ones ideas (2) Some new members could last a long time.

← Student identifies some reasons for term limits but offers minimal discussion (i.e., provides no examples and only minimal detail).

← Student identifies some reasons against term limits but offers no discussion.



# INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

## Grade 8 Social Studies

The open-response item “Term Limits” was designed to assess students’ ability to analyze an issue (i.e., term limits) that relates to the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy. By successfully answering this question, students demonstrate an understanding that the Constitution of the U.S. is a flexible document and changes over time to meet the needs of its citizens. The instructional strategies below present ideas for helping students explore and master these concepts.

Have students work individually, in pairs, and/or in small groups to complete any or all of the following activities:

- Write an editorial in favor of or against term limits.
- Conduct research and participate in a class debate about the issue of term limits.
- Write to a Congressperson or a locally elected official to ask their position on term limits or to express your own.
- Construct a chart that illustrates the success of incumbent candidates in a recent election.
- Design a campaign leaflet or pamphlet that presents reasons for or against your position on term limits.
- View C-SPAN coverage or read congressional transcripts of the debates about term limits. Summarize the information presented.
- Conduct research on another amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Present the arguments (historical or present-day) for and against the amendment.